

Our Lady of the Black Hills

March 21 & 22, 2009, Fourth Sunday of Lent

How to Contact Us

Our Lady of the Black Hills Parish Church
12365 Sturgis Road, Piedmont, SD 57769
Telephone: (605) 787-5168
Fax: (605) 787-4106
Website: www.olbh.org
Email: olbh@olbh.org
Office Hours: Monday-Friday,
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Our Staff

Pastor: Fr. Mark McCormick
(mark.mccormick@olbh.org)
Deacons: Walt Wilson and John Osnes
Coordinator of Gatherings of Grace:
Teresa Thompson
(teresa.thompson@olbh.org)
**Coordinator of Youth and Young
Adult Ministry:** Teresa Thompson
(teresa.thompson@olbh.org)
Coordinator of Liturgy: Lorraine
Rieth-Ptacek (lorraine.ptacek@olbh.org)
Office Manager: Betsy Van Asma
(betsy.vanasma@olbh.org)
Bookkeeper: Lorinda Collings
(lorinda.collings@olbh.org)
Coordinator of Maintenance:
Jim Wranek (jim.wranek@olbh.org)

Liturgy and Prayer

Sunday Liturgy: Saturday, 5:00 pm;
Sunday, 9:00 am and 6:00 pm
Daily Liturgy: Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, 8:00 am
Morning Prayer: Following Daily Liturgy
**Eucharistic Adoration
and Reconciliation:**
Wednesday, 6:00 to 7:00 pm
Sacrament of Reconciliation:
Saturday, 3:30 to 4:30 pm
Taize Prayer: First Sunday, 7:30 pm

Gatherings of Grace

Our parish has an intergenerational model
of faith formation called Gatherings of
Grace. All generations meet together the
second Wednesday of each month,
September through May.

Bulletin Announcements

Please email to bulletin@olbh.org by
Tuesday noon for the following Sunday
bulletin.

Sparks from Fr. Mark

One of the great disciplines or practices of Lent is prayer. Several weeks ago in my preaching, I encouraged us to offer prayers of intercessions on the behalf of others and then to call and invoke the Communion of Saints to intercede with us and on our behalf too.

A great way to do this is when we end our prayers . . . for example, the Saints on our Northern American San Damiano Cross that graces our sanctuary; St. Catherine Drexel pray for us, St. Isaac Jogues pray for us, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton pray for us, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha pray for us, Our Lady of Guadalupe pray for us, and Our Lady of the Black Hills pray for us.

I was also struck by Cathy Sass who shared with us about the jail ministry she is involved in and how the inmates are relying on our faith and prayers for their strength and healing through Christ.

In the last step of the Seven Step or Lumko method put out by the Catholic Biblical Federation says: "The words of scripture, the various experience of God's Word, the daily problems—these all become fuel for prayer. Some find this form of sharing in prayer the easiest way to communicate with others."

The spontaneous intercessory prayer that comes from our hearts fosters this type communication with God— Father, Son and Holy Spirit and each other.

I came across this article (featured within this bulletin) and I used some of it in my preaching several weeks ago and wanted to share it with you. It might be helpful in kicking up your prayer this Lenten season. Happy praying and say a few prayers for me too.

Fr. Mark

*We love Jesus, yes we do!
We love Jesus, how 'bout you?*

Life Teen / Edge presents the
Wii Love Jesus Social Night
Building community and fellowship by socializing and competing
in Wii video games as well as "old school" board games.

Sunday, March 22 following the 6:00 pm mass

All Middle & High School Youth welcome!!



Growing and Celebrating through the Teachings of Jesus Christ

This Week at Our Lady of the Black Hills

Monday, March 23

St. Toribio de Mogrovejo
Isaiah 65:17-21; Psalms 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a, and 13b; John 4:43-54 (violet)

8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: For healing of Ludwik Marcin)
8:30 – 10:30 am: Staff Meeting
6:30 pm: Cub Scouts
6:30 pm: Gatherings of Grace Core Team Meeting
7:00 pm: Lenten Reconciliation Service at Blessed Sacrament

Tuesday, March 24

Ezekiel 47:1-0, 12; Psalms 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; John 5:1-16 (violet)

8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Ryan Renner and all Confirmation Candidates, Sponsors, Retreat Leaders for the OLBH Confirmation Retreat this weekend)
7:00 pm: Boy Scouts
7:00 pm: Lenten Reconciliation Service at St. Therese

Wednesday, March 25

The Annunciation of the Lord
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10; Psalms 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38 (white)

8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Healing for those who have been affected by sexual abuse.)
9:00 am – Noon: Food Pantry
6:00 pm: Adoration and Reconciliation

Thursday, March 26

Exodus 32:7-14; Psalms 106:19-20, 21-22, 23; John 5:31-47 (violet)

8:00 am: Daily Liturgy (Intention: Casey Rice)
10:30 – 11:30 am: Staff Holy Hour

Friday, March 27

Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22; Psalms 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23; John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30 (violet)

No Daily Liturgy
4:00 pm: Confirmation Retreat begins (overnight)
5:00 – 7:00 pm: Lenten Fish Fry
7:00 pm: Women's Way of the Cross with Cathy Wang (Stations of the Cross)



Saturday Morning, March 28

Jeremiah 11:18-20; Psalms 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12; John 7:40-53 (violet)

No Morning Mass

9:00 am - Noon: Food Pantry
5:00 pm: Confirmation Retreat concludes

Saturday Evening, March 28

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33 (violet)

3:30 – 4:30 pm: Sacrament of Reconciliation

5:00 pm: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the repose of Sharon Phelps)

Sunday, March 29

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15; Hebrews 5:7-9; John 12:20-33 (violet)

9:00 am: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For improved health of Janice Collings)

10:30 am: Coffee Hour with Ken and Pam Freeman

6:00 pm: Sunday Liturgy (Intention: For the OLBH Community)

7:00 pm: Life Teen/Edge

Intercessory Prayers

Life and Health Concerns: Janice Collings, Kent Antonsen, Joe Creek, Alice Donley, Barbara Hatch, Marvin Kari, Betty Kirker, Joni Osnes, Don Snyder, Gordon Stark and Jim Wranek

Repose: Sharon Bunch,

Collection Report

March 14 & 15, 2009

Loose	\$ 2,400.10
Envelopes	2,124.00
Student	55.73
Adopt a Seminarian	70.00
Mass Intentions	30.00
Other	755.00
Total	\$ 5,434.83

Mass Ministry Schedule

3/28 & 3/29	5:00 pm	9:00 am	6:00 pm
Bread Baker	Lori Kline		
Altar Servers	B. Ehresmann Courtney Cassen Elijah Ehresmann	Gina Czmowski Taylor Thies Christian Weaver	Austin Evans Olivia Lyle Max Lyle
Precious Body	Walt Wilson	Walt Wilson	Walt Wilson
Precious Blood	Tom Van Asma Betsy Van Asma Jacqui Blaha Jan Schurman	Brad Blauvelt Mary Blauvelt Dennis Fischer Sharon Long	D. McCormick Jim McCormick Caitlin Wilson Judy Wilson
Lectors	Greg Sass Nancy Sass	Marty Quinn Mary Coffin	Michelle Bucholz C. Denekamp
Sacristans	Patty & Charlie Cresalia	Kathy & Ken Van Asma	Cathy & John Wang
Ushers	Diane Norman Joe Norman	The Inman Family	Robert Dyczek Brad McCaskell
Choir	OLBH Choir	Regina's Minstrels	OLBH Band

From the Diocesan Pro-Life Commission

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

The Holy Bible, John 3:16-17, www.usccb.org/nab/bible/

Next Sunday's Readings

**Please note that due to RCIA, the readings for the 9:00 am mass on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent are different than what is listed below.

Reading 1: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the LORD. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the LORD, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

R. (12a) **Create a clean heart in me, O God.** Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me. **R.**

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me. **R.**

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return to you. **R.**

Reading II: Hebrews 5:7-9

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Gospel: John 12:20-33

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

<http://www.usccb.org/nab/readings/032809.shtml>

For the Ride Home

by Ted Bergh

Scripture

- ...from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David. (1 Samuel 16:13)
- ...you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. (Psalm 23:5)
- You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness... (Ephesians 5:8,9)
- "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" (John 9:35,6)

Reflection

- How are you able to believe in Jesus (in God?) in good times and bad?
- In difficult times, how do your blessings (faith) overflow?
- What blessings flow out of hardship?
- How do you live as "children of light?"
- "Who is Jesus that I may believe in Him?"

When we pray we should occasionally cup our hands and hold them open before God. This gesture represents the openness of a heart ready to be trusted and filled by God's loving presence. Identifying with the humble and the poor Jesus, Francis opened His hands and heart. He became a beggar like the ones he saw along the wayside, and trusted completely in divine providence.

Simsic, Wayne, *Living the Wisdom of St. Francis*, Paulist Press; Mahwah, NJ, p20.

Feast of the Annunciation

Wednesday, March 25, is the Feast of the Annunciation, which celebrates Mary's "yes" to life, thus allowing Jesus to be conceived in her womb. This day is also observed as "Day of the Unborn Child" in many countries and is promoted by the Knights of Columbus in the U.S. Please join in "celebrating the Annunciation" by attending daily Mass, praying the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, or praying the prayer below. You may also begin the Novena for the Annunciation found at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/NovenaAnnunciation.pdf>.

Prayer for the Feast of the Annunciation

Almighty and ever living God, your Son was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her greeting to Elizabeth caused her unborn child, John the Baptist, to leap for joy in the Holy Spirit. May we, too, rejoice at the gift of every child. Fill us with a sense of reverence and awe for the babies you are knitting in their mothers' wombs so that we will never hesitate to raise our voices on their behalf in the face of the many threats against them. We ask this of You, Father, through your Incarnate Son in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen. (Bishop Blase Cupich, 2007)

OLBH Parish News

Thank You!!

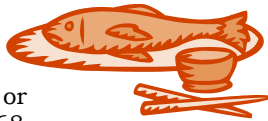
Thank you to all Our Lady of the Black Hills parishioners for your thoughts and prayers during the past 5 months. By the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, Carisa is recovering from 5 brain surgeries within 2 months slow but sure. It was a very rough time for the Headid family but with your prayers we made it through. Take it from us -never underestimate the power of prayer. We want to assure all of you our prayers for you and your intentions especially through this Lenten season. ~Carisa, Jim, Christa & Sara Headid

Returning Catholics Meeting

Everyone interested in the Retuning Catholic Ministry is invited to attend the core team meeting on Tuesday, March 24 at 7:00 PM. During this meeting an update on the first series will be provided. If you are interested in helping as a prayer partner, mentor, or some other way, or simply interested in the program, please come. If you are unable to attend and would like more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Greg Sass at greg.sass@olbh.org or 348-2213.

Friday Fish Fries

Join us on Friday evenings during Lent from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. We will offer fried cod fillets with baked potato, coleslaw and roll, or macaroni and cheese, coffee or fruit punch and a brownie with ice cream. The proceeds will benefit various OLBH ministries. If you would be willing to help set up, cook, or clean up, please sign up in the gathering area or contact the parish office at 787-5168.



Collection Counters Needed

We are in need of a few people to help count collections. This need not be and every week if we have enough people to help count. If you are interested, please call Pam at 787-4391.

Piedmont Valley Lions Club Breakfast

French Toast & Sausage or Biscuits-N-Gravy Breakfast will be held on Sunday, March 29th, at the American Legion in Piedmont, 7:30 am - 12:30 pm. Tickets for the breakfast cost \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 6-11; children under 6 are free. Advance tickets are available from any Piedmont Valley Lions Club member or will be available at the door.

Interested in hosting one of the tea tables?

The 2009 high tea has been scheduled for Saturday, April 18 from 2:00-4:00 pm. Would you like to host a table? If you are interested, please sign up in the gathering area and we will contact you with more information. Set up will be Friday, April 17 from noon - 9:00 pm. If you have any questions, please contact Judy at 484-3375.

Cleaning House

The Parish Office is cleaning house and will have several filing cabinets that can go to a new home (or office). See Betsy for more information.

OLBH Lenten Family Retreat

Guess What! ~ OLBH will be having a Lenten Family Retreat on Sunday, March 22nd at 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with lunch to follow. Our goal is to provide an opportunity for families with children preschool aged through 5th grade, to come together as a community of faith, to pray together, to learn together and to have fun together while learning about Holy Week. Please sign up in the Gathering Area or call Teresa in the parish office at 787-5168.

Catholics Returning Home

An Invitation for Nonpracticing Catholics

- Were you raised Catholic but do not come to Church anymore?
- Are you a Catholic who now feels separated from the Church?
- Would you like to know more about the Catholic Church as it is today?
- Would you like to feel at home in the Catholic Church again?

This is not a lecture series – but includes story-telling and discussion among the team and participants. You will have an opportunity to explore your thoughts and feelings about the Church, God and your faith life. We will also offer updates on changes in the church since Vatican II, a walkthrough of today's Mass, a session on Reconciliation (the 'new' perspective on 'confession'), and other topics which will help you understand what life in the Church is like today and how you can find your way back to an active practice of your faith.

No matter how long you have been away and no matter the reason, we invite you to consider renewing your relationship with the Catholic Church. We are asking you to make a special effort to invite any of your nonpracticing friends, relatives, or acquaintances to join us. Our goal is not to judge or coerce. Our goal is to accompany and help one another to take the next step in each person's spiritual journey.

The sessions will be held at Our Lady of the Black Hills Piedmont, Tuesday evenings for six consecutive weeks beginning April 14, 2009 from 7-8:30 pm. If you have any questions, please call Our Lady of the Black Hills at 787-5168 or contact Greg Sass at greg.sass@olbh.org

The Way of the Cross for Women

Attention all women. I am looking for women who would like to help with the Stations of the Cross on Friday March 27th at 7:00 pm. At our last Gatherings of Grace Sister Marie Schwan honored us with her presence and was selling her book called The Way of the Cross for Women. I spoke with Father Mark to get his approval to do the Stations according to this way...I also emailed Sr. Marie to invite her to join us. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you are interested in being a part of such a spiritual experience. Please feel free to contact me at 718-8913 or email me at cathyandjohn@rushmore.com with any questions or if you would like to help me get this organized. Let this be a part of your Lenten journey.

Diocesan News

2009 Palm Sunday Brunch

Our ministry at Catholic Social Services is focused on strengthening and healing families in our diocese. CSS professional staff offers a variety of prevention/educational workshops, youth prevention programs, parenting classes and marital/family counseling services. Office locations are in Eagle Butte, Mission, Pine Ridge, Rapid City, Spearfish and Sturgis. Your presence at the annual Palm Sunday Brunch on April 5 allows us to continue this valuable work to people in need, regardless of their ability to pay. Together, we can change lives. All are welcome. Brunch tickets are complimentary. A free will offering is taken. Call CSS at 348-6086 or 800-727-2401 for reservations.

4th Degree Knights of Columbus Meeting

Reminder: 4th Degree will meet the fourth Tuesday of the month. Next meeting is: March 24th at St. Therese the Little Flower at 7:00 pm.

Thank you!

Thank you! Catholic Social Services thanks you for your generosity during this year's Ash Wednesday Appeal. Your gift is an overwhelming statement that Christ's compassion is present in our diocese. Please continue to pray for the poor among us, and for those suffering from addiction, family conflict and anxiety. Pray also for those who provide services to help strengthen families.

Prayer Intention

For Catholic Social Services and all those who gave generously to the Ash Wednesday Appeal demonstrating that Christ's compassion is present in our diocese. Let us pray to the Lord.

Women of Faith

Saint Bonaventure from the Cathedral's windows will be the topic on Wednesday, March 25 from 9-11 am in the Cathedral Hall (basement). Plan on making palm crosses for the hospital and homebound on April 1.

Job Opening – Youth Director

The Cathedral is hiring a Youth Director. The position of Youth Director is responsible for developing a comprehensive youth ministry program for all middle and high school age parishioners to include weekly formation gatherings, Confirmation program and deeper growth opportunities, curriculum development, recruitment/training/support of volunteers in the formation program, fundraisers, retreats and prayer experiences, attendance at meetings, preparation of yearly budget. Position is full time. Degree and/or experience in catechetical formation are desirable. Organizational and motivational skills are required. Competitive salary and benefits package available. Contact the rectory office at 605-342-0507 for an application and job description. Resumes can be e-mailed to beth@cathedralolph.org. Completed application and resume can be sent to:

Parish Administrator
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
520 Cathedral Drive
Rapid City, SD 57701

IHM Seminary Visit

On March 27-29, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Winona, MN, and the Office of Vocations will host a Live-In Weekend for young men who are juniors/seniors in high school and college-age students who are interested in knowing more about the seminary life. The Live-In schedule will include a tour of the campus, discussions, meals and prayer with the college seminarians, plus attendance at classes and time for recreation. There is No Charge for the weekend. We will leave on Friday, March 27, and return on Sunday, March 29. (Please note the date change – dates on the registration form are incorrect.) For further information, please contact Fr. Brian Christensen, Director of Vocations at (605) 484-8940 or Godscall@diorc.org. Registration forms available at www.Gods-call.org.

Sex and Cell Phones: Protect Your Children

Pornography is immediately and constantly available to children and young people via cell phones and other devices. Parents need to be well-informed when purchasing devices and in regard to such matters as screening devices and programs. The Religious Alliance Against Pornography has developed a booklet for parents entitled "Sex and Cell Phones: Protect your Children." To download free copies of the booklet, go to the home page of the diocesan Web site at www.rapidcitydiocese.org, then click on Diocesan Safe Environment Program, then on Sex and Cell Phones on the sidebar.

Keep Conscience Protection

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is inviting public comment on a proposal to rescind an important federal regulation that was issued in December 2008. The regulation implemented and enforces three federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care providers. For more information or to make a comment in support of conscience protection for Catholic health care professionals and institutions, visit www.usccb.org/conscienceprotection. Comments must be posted by April 9, 2009.

Praying Lent This Year Online Ministry

Praying Lent This Year guides Catholics through Lent so that their hearts and minds are renewed and they grow in their relationship with God. Provided by the Collaborative Ministry Office at Creighton University, *Praying Lent This Year* is posted on the diocesan Web site at www.rapidcitydiocese.org. Resources include preparing for Lent, daily prayers and reflections, readings, and celebrating Easter.

Bake Sale for Life

Please help support Masses for Pro-Life issues. Every day somewhere in the Diocese a Mass is offered for Pro-Life intentions. The Blessed Sacrament Parish Pro-Life Committee is sponsoring a bake sale March 28th from 2-7pm and after each Mass March 29. All are welcome. In the event you cannot attend and wish to contribute, donations may be sent to Pro-Life committee c/o Mary Mitchell, 113 Berry Pine Road, Rapid City, South Dakota, 57702

Diocesan News, continued

Chicken Noodle Dinner

Saturday, April 4, 2009 at New Underwood Community Center serving starts 4:30 and will continue until 7:30 pm. Enjoy Bingo - Cake Walk - Ring Toss. Adults \$5 - under 12 \$3 includes salad & pie.

Remembrance for Pope John Paul II

Join others on the 4th anniversary of Servant of God, Pope John Paul II's death for Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday, April 2, 2009, 6:00 – 7:00 pm (following 5:30 pm Mass) Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Our Lady's Chapel. We will pray the Rosary and listen to a reflection about his life. For more information contact Paul and Theresa Witte at wittes@knology.net.

Concert with Matt Maher

Matt Maher, songwriter/worship leader from St. Timothy Catholic Church, in Mesa, Arizona, will perform on Saturday, April 4, 2009, at TF Riggs Theatre, 1010 E. Broadway Ave, Pierre, SD. Maher was part of the Pope Benedict XVI's historic visit to the United States, last April and played a major musical role during the World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney, Australia. Doors will open at 6:30 and the concert begins at 7:00 p.m. Limited seating is available. Tickets can be purchased at Mustard Seed in Rapid City, or from Lisa Fahey at 605-224-8969 or email lisafohey@pie.midco.net. The cost is \$15. After March 15, and at the door, concert tickets will be \$20.

Vocation Weekend for Young Women

Interested in finding the love of your life? God has a plan and a vocation – a love – in mind for you. Join us April 3-5 for a Vocation Weekend for Young Women. For young women ages 16-30. This weekend will be a great opportunity to spend time with consecrated women and priests and learn more about discernment and vocations. At retreat lodge in Fort Pierre, SD; meet at St. John's Catholic Church, 206 W Main, Fort Pierre, SD. Retreat begins at 7 PM on Friday, April 3, and ends the evening of Sunday, April 5. (Please note the date change – dates on the registration form are incorrect.) Cost is \$15. Contact Susan Safford, Coordinator of Vocations, Diocese of Rapid City, at 605-343-3541, or ssafford@diorc.org for more information. Registration forms available at www.Gods-call.org.

Rachel's Corner

"I prayed for forgiveness and I found mercy. I prayed for mercy and I found peace. I prayed for peace and found love." - Testimony after a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat™. If you are hurting from an abortion, pray to St. Peter Damian, the Saint of the Poor. Come to know the joys of eternal light at a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat™ and experience the mercy, peace, and love of God.

Contact Carol Kling for information about area retreats at 605-374-5639 or ckling@sdplains.com or go to the diocesan website:

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/Ministries/FamilyLife.htm.

For more information, contact the national office at 877-467-3463 or www.rachelsvineyard.org.

Sparks article, continued

One of the most powerful things individuals or a group can do is to pray as intercessors. Listen to these words of Jesus: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:11) Jesus also promised: "If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven" (Mt 18:19).

Each of us has personal needs or knows of various needs of our families, friends, neighbors, at work, etc. Now more than ever, we also need to pray and intercede for our Church, our leaders, and the world in a deeper way. Whether intercessory prayer is already a part of your prayer life, or your group's prayer, or if you have never tried it, here are some suggestions on how to intercede for others:

1. Since it is the prayer of the righteous that is powerful and effective (Jas 5:16), first take a few minutes to examine your consciences before you pray, and repent of any sins, including harsh feelings you may have against other people. For many groups, this will be done silently.
2. Then spend a few minutes in silence, to quiet your minds and come into God's presence.
 - During this time, ask the Lord to give you a sense of the things He wants you to pray for. Put aside your own agendas, concerns, and desires and unite yourself to Jesus' heart. You may want to write down the things that God places on your hearts.
 - If you are doing this in a group, briefly share with one another what you wrote down. This should include personal needs, as well as what you think God is leading you as a group to pray for. Give special weight to those issues that more than one person shared as a similar thing to pray for. In addition, you may want to maintain an ongoing list for intercessory prayer.
3. Be sure to also pray for the things that you believe are close to God's heart — for those who have no faith; for those who have fallen away from Jesus; for renewal and unity in all the Christian churches; for all the lost, abandoned, or forgotten children of the world; for those under the power of addictions or bound by depression, anxiety, or bitterness.
4. As you pray, take confidence in God's power to overcome any obstacle. Stand firm in faith, and wait to see God work in power.
5. Keep a record of the things you prayed for and of the ways God answered those prayers. Answered prayer builds up our own faith and encourages us to continue in our prayer.

As intercessory prayer becomes an important element in your individual and group prayer, don't forget to take time to thank the Lord and praise Him for all the wonderful ways He has worked — especially through your prayers.

(Maurice Blumberg is Executive Director of the National Fellowship of Catholic Men. This article is part of NCFM's sponsorship of the Catholic Man channel. Contact NCFM at P.O. Box 86381, Gaithersburg, MD 20886 or e-mail them at info@nrcm.org. Many thanks to the The Word Among Us for allowing us to include in this article material from their monthly devotional magazine.)

Promoting Vocations

Why should we promote vocations awareness in our church?

Catholics need to know about the ordained priests and religious men and women who serve them for at least three reasons: so that they can appreciate what they do for them; so that they may be reminded to show active support; and also so that they might consider the ordained priesthood or religious life for themselves, family or friends.

In talking with your Children, have you neglected to raise the call to Church ministry? The process of answering God's call begins in childhood. Throughout adolescence and adulthood, the attitudes assumed in childhood begin to influence the course of one's life. A vocation or a talent will not grow to fruition unless it is nurtured in childhood and adolescence by a parent.

Often children talk about what they want to be "when they grow up": doctors, lawyers, athletes, nurses, movie stars, teachers, carpenters. They may talk about these roles, but do they ever talk about being a priest, sister or brother? You are the hand of God — encourage your children to consider Church ministry.

Serra for priestly and religious vocations

What kinds of people become priests, sisters or brothers?

Are they uncommonly holy, unusually saint-like? No. They are people who make mistakes, people who aren't afraid to be human while in God's service.

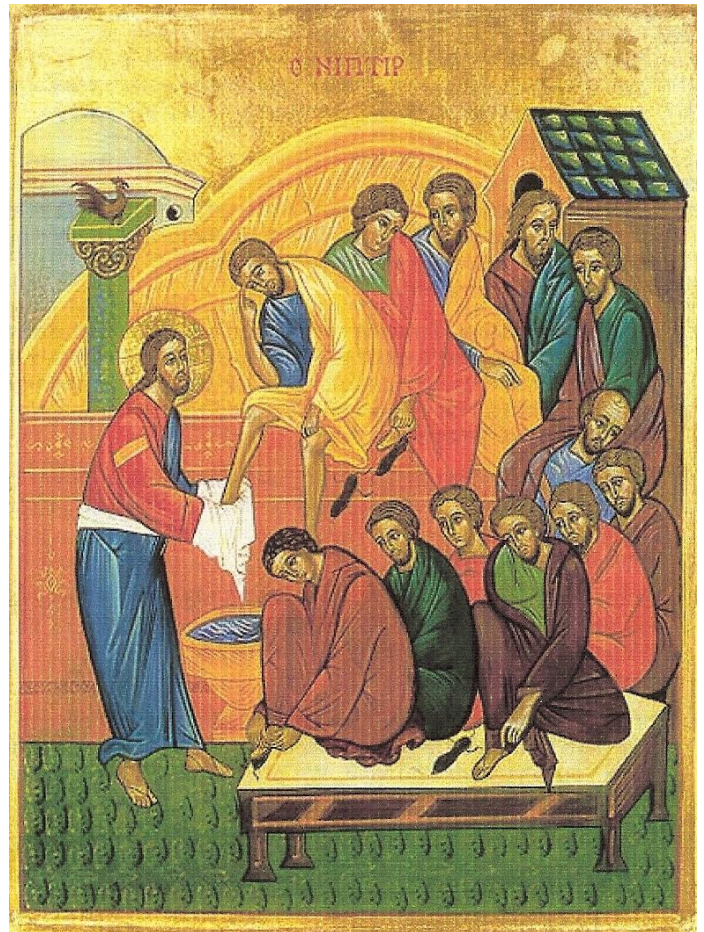
Are they people who can't face the competition and cruelty of the "real" world? No. They are people who believe that through ministry they can immerse themselves in the world and make positive changes.

Are they people who don't relate well with other people? No. They are people who love others — people who find real satisfaction chatting with a 93-year-old parishioner, holding the hand of a cancer patient, listening to the troubles of a streetwise teen.

They are people with the courage to touch lives, hearts and souls in a high-tech, unchurched world.

Are you that kind of person?

Serra for priestly and religious vocations



Praying with the Icon Project

Another great way to promote vocations is to participate in the Icon Project. Together you pray for vocations! You can bring the Icon Project to your home and find a place that will be set apart to place the icon. Then find a time to gather around the icon with the whole family (dinnertime, before bed, etc.).

To participate in the Icon Project, sign up in the gathering area for the week that you want to take home the Icon. If you have any questions, please contact the office, 787-5168.

Prayer to Know My Vocation: My Lord and my God, you are Love itself, the source of all love and goodness. Out of love you created me to know you, to love you, and to serve you in a unique way, as no one else can. I believe that you have a plan for my life, that you have a mission in your Kingdom reserved for me alone. Your plan and your mission are far better than any other I might choose: they will glorify you, fulfill the desires of my heart, and bring salvation to those souls who are depending on my generous response.

Lord grant me the light of grace I need to see the next step in Your plan; grant me the generosity necessary to follow your call; and grant me the courage required to take up my cross and to follow you.

Show me your will, O gentle and eternal God, and help me to say with Mary, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." Let me say with Jesus, "Let not my will be done, but yours." Amen.